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THE CYBORG WILL SEE YOU NOW: Tech company launches self-serve "CarePod" healthcare booths that use AI instead of doctors

11/21/2023 // Cassie B. // 2.2K Views



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Al has already taken over the jobs of many professionals, from writers and coders to graphic designers. Now, however, it is poised to take on the role of doctor through technologies like Forward Health's CarePod, a futuristic-looking booth that people can enter to receive medical services.

These portable, self-contained doctors' offices use smart sensors, body scanners and algorithms that are capable of providing people with diagnoses instead of traditional medical staff like doctors and nurses.



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According to the company, some of the tasks that CarePods can perform include throat swabs, blood pressure readings and blood draws.

To use a CarePod, an individual walks up to its door and uses their mobile device to unlock it. They then enter the empty room and sit down in a chair in front of a large touchscreen. A female voice guides them through the entire process, and the floor is fitted with a glowing ring that shows the location of the full-body scanner. A hidden drawer contains the equipment needed to provide any medical tests that are needed.

Users can choose from a range of services and apps related to specific health concerns and ailments. Everything from diabetes screening and weight management to thyroid testing and liver health are covered. There is also a full-body scan option.

If, for example, a user selects the heart health option, a drawer will open and present them with a sensor, which they will be instructed to place against their heart. Once its assessment is completed, it will display the diagnosis on the screen. In cases where an individual needs more treatment, one of the company's doctors will look over the findings in real time and provide a prescription or further instructions within minutes.



The company says it measures blood pressure using a wireless arm cuff, while a scanner handles skin testing and a single-use, needle-less collection device performs blood tests. There are also swabs for illnesses such as strep throat and COVID-19. Although Forward Health has said that the pods can test patients for sexually transmitted infections, details on how the tests work are not available.

Access to these stations costs \$99 per month, which includes use of their health apps, virtual doctor visits and 24/7 care team support. Insurance is not accepted. Every pod has an attendant outside who services it between uses and can answer basic questions, although they are not doctors and will not enter the pod with the patient.

Will people trust AI with sensitive medical data?

Forward Health CEO and Co-Founder Adrian Aoun, who previously ran special projects at Google, said that he'd like to see doctor's offices replaced by these systems.

He told TechCrunch: "Basically, what I'm doing is slowly migrating every single thing from a doctor and nurse to hardware and software. We don't even believe a doctor's office should exist. We think that it's a thing of the past."

He explained that the system is constantly analyzing the latest research papers and using them to refine the AI used to create its care plans. It also uses robust security for access control and data encryption. He says that patient privacy is paramount and that patients' data is always protected and never sold to third parties. Moreover, because they do not accept insurance, the only time they share certain data is when someone is referred to a specialist.

CarePods will be installed in malls, office buildings and gyms throughout the nation, beginning with major cities like New York City and Chicago.

Some people welcome the thought of not having to a see an actual doctor, whether in-person visits make them nervous or they simply don't trust doctors. Many Americans complain of long wait times for appointments, incompetent doctors, misdiagnoses, rushed appointments and other problems that could perhaps be eliminated with solutions like this.

However, in many of the other jobs AI has been replacing, like writers and coders, a lot of nuance is getting lost, and there are plenty of cases where human judgment simply cannot be replaced. It is hard to trust what a machine says when they are vulnerable to so many issues, from technological glitches and data breaches to hackings and inaccurate results. Only time will tell if people are willing to trust their sensitive medical data to these pods.

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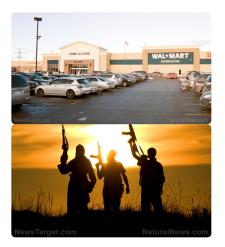
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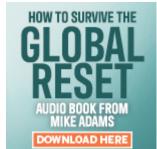












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